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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [BF](#)  
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR HEAD OF STATE-LEVEL DEMARCHE BY  
AMBASSADOR

¶1. This is an action request for the Ambassador or  
Charge.

OBJECTIVE  
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¶2. To seek tangible improvements in UNGA voting by the  
Bahamas as part of a targeted effort to engage 17 friendly  
countries whose UNGA voting records vary sharply from  
their close relations with the U.S. The President and the  
Secretary have endorsed this initiative.

ACTION REQUESTED  
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¶3. To align the Bahamas' voting  
record more closely with that of the U.S. on key votes,  
the Ambassador or Charge is requested to meet with the  
Head of State, upon his return from UNGA, and deliver a  
demarche bringing his attention to his country's low voting  
coincidence with the U.S. (when not including consensus  
resolutions). If the Head of State is not  
available to receive the demarche within a reasonable time,  
the meeting should be held with the Foreign Minister.

TALKING POINTS  
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¶4. Ambassador or Charge may draw on the following points:

-- As allies, the United States and the Bahamas cooperate and  
work closely together in many areas. (Post may add specific  
examples at its own discretion). We have many ties of  
friendship as well as common hopes,  
principles, and values.

-- Yet in 2007 the Bahamas only voted with the U.S. 15 percent  
of the time, when not including consensus resolutions.

-- The United States views the United Nations as having  
great potential for achieving progress on many issues. If  
agreement and widespread support among Member States can  
be reached for balanced and responsible resolutions,  
decisions, and other initiatives it would make the UN more  
effective and a more credible voice in the world.

-- We understand that some votes may be explained by  
solidarity with regional groups or blocs based on other  
factors, but, in our view, such solidarity often appears  
inconsistent with the national interests and policies of  
your government outside the unique culture of the United  
Nations.

-- As the new session of the UN General Assembly begins, I  
hope you will bear in mind that in the U.S. both the  
President and the Congress view UN voting coincidence as a  
barometer of the closeness of a bilateral relationship.

-- In the coming weeks I hope we can begin a dialogue between our experts and yours on how we might better improve cooperation on issues of importance before the UN.

End Points.

#### BACKGROUND ON THIS INITIATIVE

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15. Key issues of importance to U.S. policy interests are being brought increasingly to vote in the UN. These include human rights, the UN budget, Israel, and development assistance. At the same time, the Group of 77 (G-77) and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) bloc is more unified and votes consistently against the U.S. The Department and other agencies have been working on a long-term strategy to counter these developments in the General Assembly. A key element of the Department's strategy is the delivery of demarches at the most senior level in 17 select capitals on UNGA voting records, U.S. priorities, and areas where we might work together more effectively. This is the first requested demarche, which seeks tangible improvements in UNGA voting by the host country. Details on each UN Member State's most recent voting records are available on the Department's website at [www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/c25867/.htm](http://www.state.gov/p/io/rls/rpt/c25867/.htm) in the annual report to Congress entitled "Voting Practices in the United Nations 2007." The Department and other agencies believe that the diversity of national interests and ideologies outside the UN can be translated into better voting inside the UN through friendly but assertive approaches to G-77/NAM countries that have reasonably good relations with the U.S.

RICE